

Bitesize Case Study: Multi-Professional Preceptorship in Cumbria

Voluntary Sector North West

This case study is one in a series of studies curated to capture best practice, and highlight innovations, from the joint Health Education England (HEE) working across the North West and Voluntary Sector North West 'Learning Matters' awards 2017. The awards are part of a cross sector adult learning campaign delivered for the health and care sector through a number of key regional partnerships and collaborations. The overarching theme of the awards is simple: lifelong learning is good for people, organisations and health.

HEE Quality Standards met:

3 - Supporting and Empowering Learners

What was the issue or problem? What did you set out to do?

Preceptorship had not been a priority for the organisation and staff from across all care groups reported that provision of appropriate professional and clinical support was variable.

Following a successful bid from Health Education England (HEE) working across the North West to support a 12 month fixed term project for workforce retention, support and enhancement, a project team was established to review current practice and develop a robust multi-professional preceptorship framework for Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT).



What did you do? What was the intervention or initiative?

We developed a structured Preceptorship competency framework to provide a twelve month period of support for the transition of newly qualified healthcare professionals from student to competent healthcare practitioner (DH, 2010). In addition a preceptorship competency framework was developed for health and social care professionals returning to work within the NHS following a career break; moving into new roles, and or, moving into new working environments. Preceptorship is a national best practice initiative and HEE (2015a; 2016a) recommends that organisations will need to develop a culture which recognises and supports the needs of new staff (Preceptees).

The intervention:

As a priority, CPFT focused on a six month pilot to implement a preceptor preparatory programme, distinct from Mentorship (HEE, 2015b), and a preceptorship competency framework for all newly qualified staff and those moving into new roles within community services.

What were the Key Outcomes?

For staff:

- Increased job satisfaction, staff engagement and commitment to the organisation and its goals (NHS National Workforce Projects, 2007)
- Development of confidence as newly qualified professional or professional in new role
- Professional socialisation into the working environment for newly qualified staff
- Development of clinical skills and autonomy within decision making
- Enhanced leadership skills and feeling valued for their expertise as preceptors

For the organisation:

- Enhanced recruitment and retention
- Reduced sickness absence
- Reduced risk of incidents and complaints
- Opportunity for 'talent spotting'
- Enhanced quality of patient satisfaction (West and Dawson, 2013)

Good practice and lessons learned from the pilot were then implemented throughout the organisation in the second half of the project. The development of the preceptor preparatory workshops and the preceptorship programme complimented other initiatives which the organisation is offering to staff. These initiatives include: Nursing Times Revalidation Resources and E-portfolio; Clinical Supervision, and Annual Appraisal. Participant feedback demonstrates that staff feel empowered and supported to learn (HEE, 2016b; Lord Willis, 2015). The organisation demonstrates a culture of learning, support and investment in staff to improve patient safety, recruitment and retention.

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What were the lessons learned?

- Engagement with staff at all levels has increased awareness and understanding of the rationale and importance of Preceptorship and the Preceptor role
- Preceptors reported an increased confidence in preparing for or carrying out their role; enhanced their leadership skills, and feel valued for their expertise
- Preceptees reported that having a preceptor aided an increase in confidence as a newly qualified professional. In addition, feedback demonstrated that structured preceptorship enhanced professional socialisation into the workplace and the building of effective working relationships
- From engagement with teams, both preceptees and preceptors reported that the preceptorship documentation was appropriate and promoted self-assessment, reflective discussion, and review of competence
- The bespoke competencies for Community Nursing have ensured relevance to the skills required for their new roles, supporting the development of their clinical and decision making skill

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